

INTERESTING FROM TYBEE ISLAND.

Arrival of the Steam Transport McClellan.

The Encounter Between the Rebel Fleet and the Union Gunboats in the Mouth of the Savannah River.

AFFAIRS AT PORT ROYAL.

The Schooner Western Star Loading with Cotton for New York.

INCIDENTS OF THE EXPEDITION.

The United States steamer McClellan, Alfred G. Gray commanding, arrived at this port yesterday morning at half past seven o'clock, from Tybee Island and Hilton Head.

The McClellan sailed from Hilton Head on the afternoon of Tuesday, Nov. 26, with Gen. Sherman and staff on board, for Tybee Island. Arriving there, she anchored and remained until morning, when General Sherman went on shore and made a reconnaissance. While so doing the enemy threw four shells at the party from Fort Pulaski, which burst in close proximity to them, doing no damage, however. The same afternoon she got under way, and landed General Sherman and staff at Hilton Head.

When returning from Tybee spoke United States gunboat Florida, with Flag Officer Dupont on board, bound for the fort at the mouth of the Savannah river, and communicated with him. The Florida returned the same evening.

The McClellan left Hilton Head on the night of Thursday, 28th ult., and brings mails and highly important despatches from General Sherman and Flag Officer Dupont.

There is no news of importance by the McClellan. Everything was progressing favorably. Health of the troops is perfect.

We are indebted to the kindness of Turner Caldwell, of the McClellan, for the early delivery of our despatches, and for other facilities, which we take this opportunity of acknowledging.

OUR SAVANNAH RIVER CORRESPONDENCE.

Our Savannah River Correspondence, Savannah, Nov. 26, 1861.
The Position of the Rebel and Union Forces—Hiring from the Rebel Guns—Movements of Commodore Tatnell, &c.
We have been two weeks last Sunday on the blockade of Savannah, cruising about, with now and then a cry from the lookout, "Sail ahoy," when we would immediately give chase, all anxious for a prize; but, alas! on reaching the straits we find one of our own vessels. After speaking her we put about with a sad countenance, and hope for better success next time.

The weather here is delightful, the thermometer running about 65 degrees in the shade. On Sunday last, the 24th, we were much pleased to have some company, the gunboats Flag, Seneca and Pocahontas having come from Port Royal and dropped anchor in our vicinity. During the afternoon the Seneca and Pocahontas went on a reconnaissance expedition, while we anxiously watched their movements. About seven P. M. was heard firing from the Seneca, which was boldly driven from the light-house on Tybee Island, followed by the Pocahontas. After firing a few shots, and no reply, the Pocahontas came to anchor, while the Seneca came down and piloted us in at half past seven P. M. Saw four of Uncle Sam's steamers riding safely at anchor, and looking right into the rebels' teeth. Our position at present is about three miles from Fort Pulaski, and the rebel flag can be seen flying at the fort, and their small steamers can be seen flying back and forth in the river above. We have possession of Tybee light and a small fort on the island which the rebels deserted. Our flag is now flying from the top of the light-house, also on the fort.

This morning the steamer Seneca took the frigate Savannah in tow and brought her up to the light, where she now lies at anchor in about five fathoms of water. About one P. M. a movement was seen from the enemy, apparently coming towards us; four small steamers. Soon we saw a flash from one of them, but their ball fell short of us.

All hands were called to heave up anchor, which was done in a few moments, and the steamer Seneca sent them her compliments in shape of a shell, closely followed by the Pocahontas and Augusta. I should think some of our shots told on the enemy, as they turned tail in double quick time after a few shots from us; it being this time we could not follow them, and returned to our anchor again.

The enemy's boats were said to have been in command of Commodore Tatnell, his pennant having been seen flying on one of them.

SAVANNAH RIVER, Nov. 27, 1861.
Outline of the Savannah Coast—Position of the Vessels of the Rebel Fleet—The Heavy Gun of the Enemy—Rebel Practice of the Gunboat Seneca—The Landing of the Union Forces—Appearance of the Light-house—Effects Found on the Island, &c., &c.

I herewith enclose you a correct outline of the coast at the entrance of Savannah river, and the position occupied by some of our vessels and the mosquito fleet in a list, &c.

As soon as the forts at Bay Point and Hilton Head were occupied, so as to form a basis for future operations, a number of vessels were dispatched to blockade several important points along the coast. Some were sent off Charleston, others off Savannah, off Fernandina, Florida, and at other points. The United States frigate Savannah (sailing vessel) was already off Tybee, and the purchased steamer Augusta was sent to that point, as was also the steamer Florida the day after her arrival from Philadelphia, where she had been compelled to resort for repairs to her machinery, caused by the severe gale encountered by the fleet off Cape Hatteras.

Soon became evident that Savannah should be a principal point of attack, probably at no distant period, for in a few days boats were sent from all those vessels, which had approached the entrance to Tybee as closely as was deemed prudent, to take the soundings of the entrance to the channel.

On the night of Saturday, 23d inst., the steamers Flag and Seneca came down from Port Royal harbor and anchored off Tybee, near the other vessels.

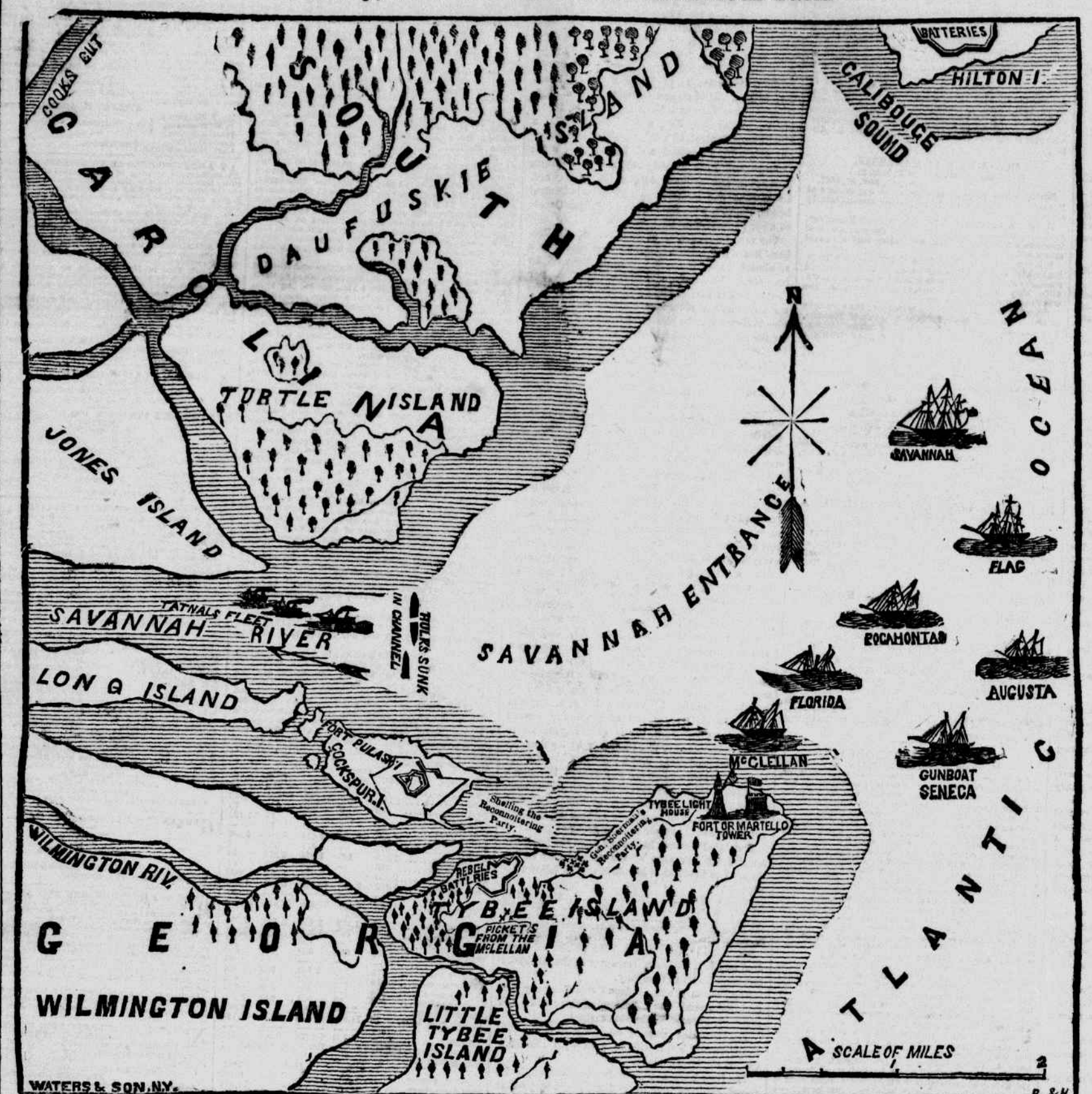
Early Sunday morning, after breakfast, the steamers slowly sailed up the entrance, the others remaining outside of the range of the guns, while the Seneca, followed by the Pocahontas (Captain Rodgers, of the Flag, being in command and on board the Seneca), slowly steamed up towards the fort, with the view of drawing the fire of the guns, to find out their range and calibre. At first they kept well off and near the opposite shore; but, as they advanced, they came nearer and nearer, until they were within a few miles of the fort, but there was no flag waving over it, nor were any guns to be seen, nor any signs of life whatever.

Finding no news from the rebels, the Seneca proceeded a little nearer and let go her eleven-inch gun. The shot fell short and elicited no reply from the fort. Again and again she fired, sometimes shot and sometimes shell, some of which burst directly over the fort. After making this maneuver for a couple of hours, she came down, and, turning round higher up, came down close to the fort, and under the range of any guns which might be there. The reason that her firing had called forth no demonstration from the rebel fort was now found to be because it had been deserted. No one was on the island. The steamers Pocahontas, Flag and Augusta now followed the Seneca, with the view of going on shore to make observations, while the Florida proceeded to Port Royal to communicate to the flag officer the intelligence that Tybee Island was occupied by our naval force, and that we had gained a foothold on the sacred soil of haughty Georgia. The steamer Florida appeared again off Tybee, and towed in the Savannah, which anchored close by the light-house, over which, as well as over the fort, the Union Stars and Stripes were triumphantly waving, in sight of the city of Savannah.

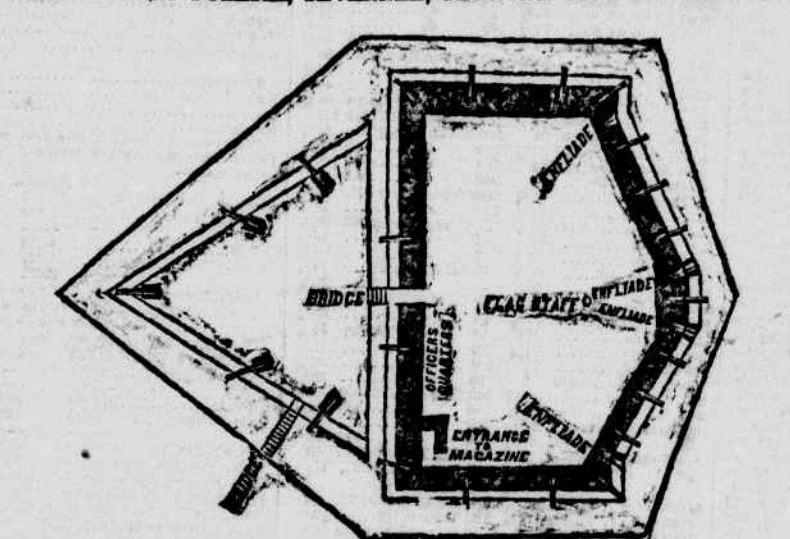
Early on the morning of Tuesday, 26th inst., several volumes of dark smoke were seen by the Savannah river, which was supposed to come from the bituminous coal.

THE ENTRANCE TO SAVANNAH RIVER.

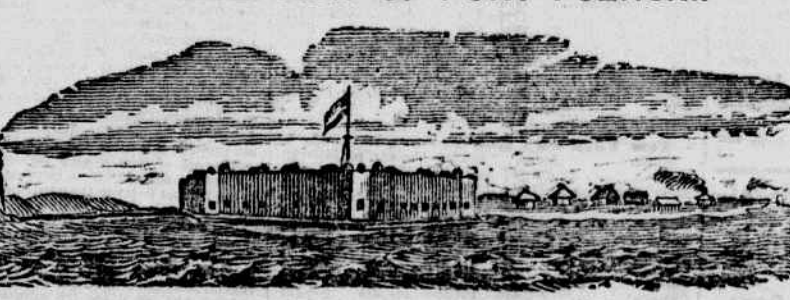
Scene of the Encounter Between the Union Gunboats and the Rebel Tatnell's Mosquito Fleet, Thursday, Nov. 26—The Rebel Fleet Driven Back.



PLAN OF FORT PULASKI, SAVANNAH, SHOWING GUNS EN BARBETTE.



SEA SIDE VIEW OF FORT PULASKI.



The firing began about a quarter past eleven, and ceased at twenty minutes of two. The Florida proceeded to Port Royal, and next morning returned with Flag Officer Dupont and Captain Rodgers, of the Whah, on board, for the purpose of visiting Tybee and judging of the uses to which it might be applied for military and strategic purposes. Signals were run up for arms to come from the fort, and two boats were lowered into one of the Savannah's launches. About twenty-four boats, with armed crews, clustered around the Savannah, and were put under command of a lieutenant, while a lieutenant of the Savannah's gig now put off towards the shore, with the flag officer and Captain Rodgers and Baron, followed by the Florida's gig and Captain Goldborough, then, Captain Rodgers, of the Flag, Ammen, of the Seneca, and other commanders, the other boats coming in behind in line. It was a beautiful sight, and one long to be remembered, to see that line of boats pulling for the shore, every man in them showing the courage with which he would press with his foot the "secret shell."

The iron work supporting the lens bears the inscription, "J. L. Sautter & Co., constructeurs, a Paris," but no date.

From the lighthouse we had a splendid view of the surrounding country. The island appeared almost round, except to the southward, where it appeared to elongate, and this part of it is covered with marshes.

In front, towards the river, were the vessels of the squadron riding at anchor. Close to the beach some two dozen or more boats, with their keels in them, were straggling to the shore with their comrades. On the beach many of the fort's party of eighty-six marines and one officer, and further on, wading around the base of an undulating of the soil, some two hundred Union troops, with muskets in their hands, and itching to use them.

Fort Pulaski, the taking of which will be necessary before Savannah can be captured. A naval force would have a great deal of difficulty in reducing Fort Pulaski, but a reliable land battery at the point of Tybee Island would do such an undertaking considerably.

I should think the gun as large as the Union or Florida could be mounted on the martello tower, which is strong enough to bear the weight, and is only about thirty feet high.

After making observations and trying to distinguish the city from whence this lighthouse is distinctly visible on a clear day, the party descended, and the marines and sailors passed in review before the Commodore.

The whole detachment then proceeded to the boats. The boatwains were dragged through the breakers aboard the vessels, and the parties pulled for their respective vessels.

There was not much of interest on the island; a few rotten carcasses of bullocks and one lame pig, which was shot, and an old wheelbarrow, were all that we saw besides the buildings. I should think this island would be a slight point for occupying by the Union troops, and have no doubt that General Sherman will soon send a regiment to occupy here.

OUR HILTON HEAD CORRESPONDENCE.

Hilton Head, S. C., Nov. 26, 1861.

The Rebel Retreat from Tybee Island—Another Harbor Secured for Our Fleet—Savannah River Effectually Blockaded—Fort Pulaski Besieged—Expedition to St. Helena Sound—A Vessel Loaded Cotton for New York—The Steamship Winifred Scott, &c., &c.

After mailing my letter yesterday, sent per steamship Tybee Island, bringing full intelligence of the evacuation of the fortifications by the rebels at that place. I understand that Commodore Dupont sent a brief report of the affair to the Navy Department at Washington. The island was occupied at half past three o'clock on the 24th inst., by an expedition sent from here by Flag Officer Dupont to report to the senior officer off Savannah River. The expedition consisted of the United States steam gunboats Flag, Pocahontas and Seneca, under the respective commands of Commander Rogers, Lieutenant Batch, and Lieutenant commanding Ammen. The channel leading from the sea to the island was carefully buoyed out, and the vessels proceeded towards the rebel fortifications with caution, at intervals throwing shells to draw the enemy's fire. After firing several rounds without any reply being made by the rebels, it was concluded by our officers that the rebel works were abandoned. Landing parties were then placed in the gunboat launches, and a start made for shore. As was anticipated, the rebels were not out, and the work was done almost entirely unopposed. The American flag was hoisted on the lighthouse amid the loud huzzas of our jolly tars. The first night the island was occupied by a small detachment of marines and sailors. The further retreat of the enemy from Tybee Island is a natural result of the capture of this point and its strategic character. The fortification on Tybee is within shelling distance of Fort Pulaski, now occupied by the rebels, being two and a quarter nautical miles from point to point. The occupation of Tybee Island and this island secures us a sea and inland water communication.

tion, and the means of besieging Fort Pulaski in front and rear. Another advantage in the recovery of Tybee Island is that it secures the official blockade of Savannah harbor, affording fourteen feet of water at low tide, and by the time this letter reaches New York, our little fleet will be securely anchored in it. Hereafter there will be no more boasting accounts in the rebel newspapers of vessels running the blockade of the Savannah river.

Commodore Dupont and Captain Davis will have a conference to-day relative to the custody of Tybee. Probably a force of 2,000 men will be sent there immediately. Yesterday a similar expedition, under Commodore Percival Drayton, consisting of the gunboats Thaddeus and Fenimore, was sent, by command of Commodore Dupont, to St. Helena Sound, to reconnoitre the defences there and ascertain their character. I will append you in my next letter of the result of the expedition.

Since the arrival here of the fleet, the outer lines of the rebel coast defences have been thoroughly examined by our war vessels. From the facts gathered in these several expeditions, it would appear that the rebels in this vicinity will fall back on the Charleston and Savannah Railroad, and make it the base of their operations. They seem desirous not to provoke hostilities, but rather to act on the defensive.

The steam gunboat Curlew made a reconnaissance to St. Helena Island a few days ago, and then found the rebels in the lighthouse, destroyed by the rebels, besides five hundred gallons of oil.

I learn from a rebel prisoner that every one of the four rebel cannon cast at Charleston has exploded from time to time since the war commenced. Charges defect in the material used.

The schooner Western Star, of New York, will repulse to St. Helena Island to-day, and there take in a cargo of cotton for New York. A dozen vessels can be loaded if our commanders here will only give the order.

The naval and army expeditions are accomplishing a great work, but in occupying different places it divides our force in a great degree. Our home government should immediately remedy this by sending reinforcements. We want cavalry very bad, and at least three companies of regular artillery to garrison the batteries already in our possession.

A military network is being drawn about us, surely over the empire of Secession, and hereafter the rebels must know nothing but steady defeat. The loyal States of the Union are aroused, every loyal citizen North or South must unreservedly lend his physical and moral support to the government, and depend upon it, before the return of another summer our Southern erring brothers will see the fullness of their present course.

The steamship Winifred Scott, which suffered so much damage in the gale of the 1st inst., is still here in almost a worthless condition. It and the Union were purchased by the government from M. O. Roberts and R. S. Dickerson for the sum of \$110,000 each. The Winifred Scott was \$60,000 each. The hulls of the vessels were built of iron sixteenths of an inch thick (more shells). Hence it will be seen the government paid pretty dearly for the Scott. To all intents and purposes, it is worthless to the government, nothing remaining of any value except the engine.

ON BOARD STEAMER MCCLELLAN, NOV. 27, 1861.

The Taking of Tybee Island—Rumors and Excitement—Tatnell and His Highest Staff—Impressments of Fort Pulaski—Consolidation of Officers—Naval Reconnaissance by the Flag Officer, &c., &c.

Yesterday morning the whole of the tented city now at Hilton Head was in an intense state of excitement. Upon inquiry I was told that Tybee Island was in the possession of our excellent navy. Then we were told that Fort Pulaski had been deserted, and was now occupied by the Jack tars that did so well but a short time since. But rumors are just now not at a premium with us, so, directing my steps to the headquarters of General Sherman, I found that we had indeed possession of Tybee, but Pulaski not yet, but was told that a party of reconnoissance would leave during the day, consisting of Gen. Sherman and one or two others. Then there was a query—"In what shall we go?" To which the ever ready Captain Saxton replies, "The McClellan, Capt. Gray, is just ready to start for New York, and a better ship we cannot find."

The McClellan received on board the party, of which your correspondent was one, and left the fleet harbor of Port Royal at two o'clock. The McClellan being quite fast, the fifteen miles were soon gone over, not before, however, an excellent collation had been despatched.

Upon our trip down the steamer Florida was spoken, and we were informed that Tatnell, with three of his flag boat fleet, came down and fired some few ineffectual shots, and then, as is the rebel wont, turned tail and steamed away for Fort Pulaski, pursued by some of our gunboats.

En passant of Fort Pulaski, I am informed by one who has lately visited that fort that it has undergone but few changes. The magazine has been protected by a large sand bag traverse, built, however, in such a manner as to allow of a possible explosion; for often a shell will cross and roll for some distance before exploding. Now such a shell might, and in all probability would, in the event of an attack, roll into this space; exploding here, the chances would be ten to one that the magazine exploded. The large guns of the armament are all mounted on barbets. These consist of some twelve columbiads, most of which are of eighteen-inch calibre, and are all named after prominent rebels. The gun carriages are all of pine, which, in event of a bombardment, might splinter rather more than would the solid oak of which we of the North make the firm carriage of the heavy guns. The carriage guns are not in calibre more than thirty-two's, and these mostly mounted upon cast iron carriages, which carriage is, I am told, a most unworkable one; for a shot or fragment of a shell that would, at the most, wound a wooden carriage, breaks a piece and renders it utterly useless for the iron. The officers' quarters are in the western portion of the work, or that of the land approach, and are pierced for musketry. There are at the present time at the fort some eight hundred or a thousand men, with quite a large quantity of stores.

Upon leaving Tybee Island we see the smoke of the high pressure wood burners, of which Tatnell has command, as well as a number of our own navy. The high lighthouse upon the island was now looming up, and, as we can just see the smoke of the guns, we are reminded of the sand batteries here, I am told, all been removed, the work of removal having been commenced as early as the 15th of the month.

Arrived at the fleet, we steamed alongside the Savannah, and learned that the steamers of "recess" had been fully engaged in the operations of the day. The gunboats Flag and Pocahontas had been pursuing the rebel steamers by a recall from the Savannah, and had been moved slowly ahead and anchored in line with the other vessels.

A few moments after the ship was anchored the different commanders assembled in the cabin of the McClellan, where a consultation was held, and it was determined to make a reconnaissance to the fort at one o'clock the McClellan's boats, with well armed crews, pulled rapidly towards the island, landing near the light-house, upon which the rebels have been seen to be moving slowly ahead and anchored in line with the other vessels.

Arriving at the lighthouse, General Sherman, accompanied by Captain Rogers and Saxton, with a few others, was soon at the top. Here, after a short consultation, it was determined to advance a body of marines to a point of land directly opposite the fort, and make a reconnaissance; upon which Captain Gray was a body of some of the McClellan, under the command of Second Officer Tamm, to act, and another party to be sent from the fort about a mile and a half, where he was being done by a complimentary party of ten or one of the columbiads, situated upon the angle of the fort. This, I am sure, was a very judicious move. The shell burst two-thirds of the distance, but in excellent line of our party, which fact was being run, and when a cloud of white smoke and a shower of shot and shrapnel from the fort, evidently more elevation had been given to the piece, for this shell burst at such an angle in the air that it had continued its flight to an extreme point of the little fort, and might have been disastrously saluted by the fragments.

The reconnaissance being completed, we were returning when another shell came whizzing, and exploded, when its fragments fell in every direction, some of which fell by our little party. This shell being so good, Mr. Saxton seemed quite satisfied, and was quietly proceeded on our examination of the island, which we found quite pleasant. My cows, goats, &c., were seen quietly grazing, but no man, with the exception of one or two who were seen escaping from the island by Second Officer Denham and his party. The road was deeply marked by the shells, and the conveyances with which the guns had been taken away.

Returning again to the McClellan we were soon under way upon our return to Hilton Head, the occupants of the position from which the reconnaissance had been made.

We had gone but a short distance upon our way when the Florida was met, bearing Commodore Dupont, who, we learned, was on his way towards the lighthouse. The naval reconnaissance, the result of which your readers shall have by the next steamer.

HILTON HEAD, NOV. 29, 1861.

Arrival of the Steamer Blenheim—Capture of Shell for the Navy—Large and Welcome Mail.

The steam gunboat Blenheim, Lieut. Steadman commanding, arrived here yesterday from New York. She brought a cargo of shell for the use of the naval fleet, and a large and welcome mail. The steamer Mayflower, Capt. Phillips, went alongside the Blenheim and carried the mails to shore. Postmaster Stearns had the mail ready for delivery in two hours after its arrival. The Blenheim brought a large quantity of New York papers, all of which were promptly bought up by the soldiers. The New

[CONTINUED ON EIGHTH PAGE.]